



YE DERBY DAYE DURING YE ROMAN PERIOD.

From a rare old Frieze, not in ye British Museum.

IL TEATRO ITALIANO.

THE other day I met FRANK JOHNSON, who always speaks the plainest English. As his name would lead one to expect, he is an Englishman.

"Ah, caro mio!" cried he, "come sta?"

"What?" I exclaimed.

"Ma parliamo italiano," said he.

"My dear JOHNSON," I asked, "why should we?" I understand a few words of Italian when spoken slowly, with an English accent.

"JOHNSON!" cried he, with a gesture of despair, "Dio mio, che nome! FRANCESCO DE' GIOVANNI, vi prego."

"My dear fellow," said I, "are you mad?"

"No," he answered, "ma voglio parlare la bella lingua della Signora DUSE."

"DUSE!" I cried; "now I know what's the matter with you. You've caught the Italian fever. I believe she is wonderful. I want to go and see her."

"Sicuro," said he, "audiamo stasera."

So we went. JOHNSON went so often that he said he could not afford more than

half a guinea, which compelled us to go in the dress circle, and not even in the front row of that. There was a draught. There often is in dress circles. I hate draughts. Behind us a lady, who seemed to understand Italian, whispered a commentary on the play to a lady who understood only English, and an Italian gentleman, a victim of the English May weather, had a fit of coughing at frequent intervals.

Before us, on the stage, some men talked Italian, and as they spoke it quickly and correctly, I did not understand a word. I only knew that it was the first act of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and I perceived that Cayley Drummie had a black beard.

"This is awfully slow," I whispered.

"Che cosa?" murmured JOHNSON. "Eccola!"

I looked up. A woman had come on. It was she. Then I forgot the draught, the whispering and the cough. I forgot the other people on the stage, which was not difficult. Yet I noticed that the bearded Cayley Drummie wore in the country the cut-away black coat of Lon-

don, and after dinner, also in the country, a high hat. And I observed that Aubrey Tanqueray shed so many tears into his handkerchief, which had a wide black border, that he was obliged to wring it out as he sat there. This was also quite English. But I cared nothing for all the others; I only thought of "*Mis-sis Tan-cheri*." I even forgot that she had no make-up, which was the more noticeable, since in real life the woman represented would certainly use hair dye or paint, whereas the actress representing her used neither.

"Ebbene?" said JOHNSON, as we came away.

"Bravo, bravissimo!" I answered. I had caught the infection also. H. D. B.

CITY NOTE. — "The Lyons' Share!" Sixteen per cent. or more! Something like one, isn't it? We suppose the JACK HALL came in for his bit. This success ought to have a telling effect on the *Crédit Lyonnais*.

"PORKER VERBA."—Grunts.



AFTER A DERBY-WINNER-DINNER.

Diner. "TICKET." Clerk. "WHAT STATION?"
Diner. "WHA-STASHUN 'VE-YOU-GOT?"

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

LAST year there was held in London, under the Presidency of the Countess of ABERDEEN, an International Congress of Women. Its object is described by the President as bringing together from all parts of the world persons of experience, capable of furnishing facts regarding the position, work, and opportunities of women at the end of the Nineteenth Century. Among such authorities, Lady ABERDEEN generously includes "men as well as women," for which my Baronite, whose sexual inferiority is an accident beyond his control, makes humble acknowledgment. But though men were privileged to take part in the Conference, women did nearly all the talking. The papers they read at the Conference have now been collected, are edited by Lady ABERDEEN, and published by FISHER UNWIN, in seven handy volumes. They form a library covering the whole field of woman's work outside her home. A remarkable and valuable contribution to knowledge on an interesting question, the importance of which is daily growing.

Mr. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS has taken his *Personal Recollections* (CASSELL & Co.), going back to pre-lucifer match times, has put them in a caldron, and boiled them up. Finding there was room for something more, he has chucked in a chapter describing a picnic in the Carpathians, with a moving tragedy of a cow, shot under painful misapprehension that it was a bear. Of

course there must be some good things in the record of a man enjoying, over a long series of years, the opportunities of Mr. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS. But my Baronite confesses he is a trifle disappointed, possibly because he expected too much. The *Recollectionner* describes ALBERT SMITH as "a lively and agreeable man full of good spirits, and full also of a mild evening-party sort of fun." That is a description that will apply to most of Mr. EDWARDS' Bohemian acquaintances as they figure on his canvas. As an example of the kind of humour that made a lasting impression on the mind of the chronicler, may be cited the case of "HARRY BAYLISS, in whose chambers was a picture frame with a black cloth hanging down before it on which might be read in white letters the alarming inscription, Ladies, Beware. When ladies visited him he made some pretext for leaving the room, and then abruptly returning surprised them gazing eagerly upon a—blank. Another funny dog, asked to pass a coin to a bus-conductor, gravely pocketed it. It was the same irresistible humourist who, again in a bus, pretends to go mad, draws a pistol from his pocket, is rushed upon by the company, breaks the pistol in two, hands half to the conductor, and begins to eat the other half. "It was made of chocolate!" says Mr. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS, with a note of well-earned admiration.

The gaydog Cavalier period of English History is pretty well played out, both for dramatist and novelist, and NELL GWYN, the Merry Monarch, with all his other Merry Mistresses as characters in a novel, are at this time of day as worthless as ever they were in real life. Pity that Mr. FRANKFORT MOORE should have occupied his time and talents on so thankless a subject as *Nell Gwyn Comedian* (PEARSON), unless it was with the purpose of showing how curiously dull was that gay court, and how forced was the merriment of the Merry Monarch and his merry courtiers. There is a slight thread of a story, and in the last scene the patient reader may find his reward, which comes better late than never.

THE BARON DE B.-W.

THE PUBLIC MAN.

["At the Lambeth Police Court a woman asked for a witness summons against a man. He was a public man, and would not attend unless summoned. The Magistrate: What do you mean by a 'public man'? Applicant: He sells newspapers in the streets."—*Daily Paper*.]

FROM my cradle I'd a craving and a thirst for notoriety;
I hungered, like a starving man, to be
A person in a prominent position in society;
I longed to hear the people say, "That's he!"
I didn't care what line I took—it might be Duke or General,
Prime Minister, Mikado, Persian Khan,
King, Democratic Socialist, Pope, KENSIT, actor, tenor—all
I wanted was to be a public man.

But Fate refused to lay my lines in places so delectable,
And when I would have been a PITT or BURKE,
The only house I entered was that ancient and respectable,
But much maligned abode, the House of Work.
The people that I mixed with were such hopeless imbecilities
They only grinned whenever I began
To tell them of the many brilliant talents and abilities
That qualified me for a public man.

But after drinking deeply of the salt and bitter water of
Distress, I took to bawling in despair,
"Defeat of CROWWRIGHT SCHREINER," "Extra Special—awful
slaughter of
Pro-Boers!" "St. James's—French in Leicester Square!"
Ah! Little did I fancy, when the street-boys' rude and
cynical

Remarks were fired upon me as I ran,
That I had actually climbed ambition's highest pinnacle,
And was in very truth a public man.



THESE PARENTS!

Mabel. "So YOUR MOTHER HAS MARRIED AGAIN?"

Maud. "Yes, THANK GOODNESS! YOU CAN'T THINK HOW GLAD I AM TO GET HER COMFORTABLY SETTLED. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A TERRIBLE TRIAL SHE HAS BEEN TO ME LATELY!"

MIS-DIRECTED MSS.

I.—A Surprise Tit-Bit.

[The following story was evidently intended for the Prize Competition in a certain weekly paper. It being an original story, Mr. Punch is ready to pay the contributor at the rate of two kicks per column, if the contributor will personally apply for the same.]

How did I become a millionaire? Well, it's a queer story, JIM, though I shouldn't like *Truth* to get hold of it; and as you seem so anxious for me not to tell it—here goes! . . . No, old chap, I can't be bribed with a whiskey to be silent. For twenty years I've been trying to tell this story, and never got a fair chance. And now, by gum! I mean to unburden myself. Excuse the "by gum!" By such little touches an air of rollicking abandonment is imparted to the monologue.

* * * *

It was when I took my ticket at Waterloo Cross for Hasbournes that the idea occurred to me. At first I was almost unmanned (ideas always try me), but with an effort I pushed open the swing-doors of the refreshment room. There is nothing like railway refreshment room

brandy if you feel seedy. Nothing like it in the wide, wide world, thank goodness! But while I was thinking what funny things they do with potatoes, up comes TRUFFLES. Instantly I resolved to try my grand idea on TRUFFLES. It was a ghastly and risky experiment: I had to stifle all humane feelings (the brandy had nobly assisted me), but I was consumed by a kind of frenzy to put this idea into action, and so chose TRUFFLES as the victim.

TRUFFLES had deeply wronged me. No 'twas no simple case of going off with my wife; or poisoning my mother—something far worse. He had deliberately said at the Club a few days before, when I told my best and latest anecdote, that he had been "brought up on it." A man who says such a thing in cold blood is beyond the pale of forgiveness.

I chose an empty compartment, and then felt in my pocket. Yes, it was there. "TRUFFLES," I said slowly and distinctly, "I have been a minor poet for years—ah, I see you wince—and no one has heeded me. I have published poems at the request of imaginary friends—and only one man has read them beside myself—the

proof-reader. The time has come when these poems *shall* be heard!" Swiftly I produced a volume from my pocket, and began to read. No living man can read worse—and TRUFFLES writhed in agony. But relentlessly I read on with unrivalled monotony of diction. TRUFFLES groaned—made a wild attempt to keep his eyes open—then fell into a deep, comatose sleep. I relieved him of his money. You begin to see my idea? Well, I repeated that trick on every lonely person I came across for the next few years, whether by rail, land, or sea. Sometimes they bribed me heavily to desist. In any case I grew rapidly rich.

* * * *

So don't tell me Poetry doesn't pay. Thunder and lightning, JIM's gone! No matter—that's how I, SLOPER PARNASSUS, became a millionaire. A. R.

CONUNDRUM (by Mr. Punch's printer's devil).—Is there any rule of English composition that Mr. ex-President STEYN invariably observes?—Yes. He never comes to a full stop without beginning with a fresh capital.



Auntie. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING, TOMMY!"
Tommy. "WE'RE BESIEGED. WE'VE RUN SHORT OF HORSES
AND COWS, AND SO WE HAVE TO FALL BACK ON MACAROONS."

TO ENGLAND.

IN MEMORY OF MAFEKING.

Relieved May 17.

LAND of the silent voice and hidden heart!
Whose boast has ever been to steel the nerve,
And hold in high reserve
The loud extremes of passionate joy and grief—
Think it not shame if for a little space,
Now when the long-drawn strain has found relief,
By summer-haunted tilth and teeming mart
You let your pride go free:
If now, this once, for all the world to see,
You wear a fearless rapture on your face.

Not that the lust of slaughter makes us mad;
Not that we laugh above a broken foe
Brave as our bravest, men that died
Forlornly faithful to a cause
Mis-named of Freedom; true to that false guide
Who used their strength to serve unequal laws
Framed for a bar to Liberty—ah, no!
Not that the might of these has fallen low
We let our hearts be glad.

But just because a little gallant band,
Eight thousand miles away and very lone,
With hunger hollowing the fevered cheek,
And parching thirst to grip the throat,
Against the leaguer's odds have shown
How the old force of England's fighting breed
Lives in her sons at need,
Made soldiers by the fierce baptising flame;
Because for love of Queen and land.
Because for honour's sake they played the game,
Stood to their task from week to lingering week,
And kept the flag afloat.

Yet when the first wild joy has had its way,
Such joy as not in all the years
Since CAMPBELL'S rescue rang through Lucknow-walls
Has made the sudden pulse of England leap—
Nay, but a joy more full and wider yet,
Because the countless echo of it calls
Out of far sister-lands from deep to deep,
Where other myriad voices claim
By right of peril shared to have their part
In every shock of joy or shame
That moves the Mother-heart—
Yet when the first wild flood has had its way,
And quiet time is ours to count the debt,
The stiller air will stir with sorrow's breath,
So close behind the triumph come the tears,
Our poor and only tribute left to spend
On those who missed to see their labour's end,
Who gladly went to death
That we might be so light of heart to-day. O. S.

CONTRA SMITHUM.

SIR,—At the Royal General Theatrical Fund Dinner, Mr. HARE made an excellent speech, which was mainly devoted to indignantly repelling Mr. SMITH, M.P.'s recent attack on the immorality of the Drama, as instanced in the cases of the *Gay Lord Quex* and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Can it be that there is a union of hearts between these two, and that, ere long, we shall be informed the Second Mrs. T. has become the *Gay Lady Quex*? What an excellent match for her! Mr. SMITH, M.P., will give her away: an easy thing to do after the feat of giving himself away so cleverly. But because Mr. SMITH is virtuous, and who will deny it, are there to be no more *Quex* and *Champagne*? Rarely, if ever, has it been my lot to see any English play to which I could not have taken my two youngsters, boy and girl. I am, Sir, yours, A PERE OF KIDS.

"AN ARMED NATION."

["The War Office has decided to grant one rifle to every ten men joining the new Rifle Clubs, throughout the country."—*Daily Press*.]

Extract from the new rules.

1. In face of the enemy the rifle must be fired as quickly as possible, and then passed on to the next man.
2. No squabbling in the ranks, as to whose turn it is to shoot, shall be allowed by the Commanding Officer, and his decision shall be final.
3. The other nine men, whilst awaiting their turn, must stand at "attention," and scowl fiercely at the enemy.
4. Where the Commanding Officer, in his discretion, sees opportunity for so doing, he shall employ several men simultaneously, to fire the rifle—i.e. one to hold the rifle to his shoulder, a second to close his left eye, and a third to pull the trigger. This plan would leave only seven men out of ten, unemployed.
5. The above-named seven would be at liberty to throw things at the enemy whilst awaiting their turn for the rifle.
6. In actual warfare, the Commanding Officer may request the enemy to wait a reasonable time whilst the solitary rifle is handed round, after being fired off.
7. Whilst an attack is going on, the unemployed men of a company shall not be allowed to leave the ranks to play, but should be encouraged to take an intelligent interest in the shooting prowess of their solitary comrade.

A BARLAMB'S BLEAT.—"I have no great opinion of the Press," says Mr. ATHERLEY JONES, Q.C., M.P. The opinion of the Press with regard to Mr. ATHERLEY JONES, Q.C., M.P., is consequently of no value whatever, not even that of a consultation fee.



THE RUSSIAN AUTOLYCUS.

"A SNAPPER-UP OF UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES."—*Winter's Tale*, Act IV., Scene 2.



A THOUGHTFUL MAN.

MR. JENKINS DROVE HIS NEW MOTOR-CAR DOWN TO EPSOM; BUT, TO MAKE SURE OF ARRIVING THERE, HE THOUGHT IT ONLY WISE TO BRING HIS HORSES AS WELL, IN CASE ANYTHING WENT "WRONG WITH THE WORKS."

PELTING THE PAINTERS.

[Young art-critics, anxious to succeed, are strongly recommended to write their notices of the Academy Exhibition in this style. It is amazingly popular, it conveys a due sense of the writer's superiority, and is very easy to manage.]

Oh, dear, dear, dear! Poor old Academy! Dunderheaded, crass, imbecile British public! Acres of canvas, gallons of paint—and the result? Ah—there you have it—the result! dear, dear, dear!

Really, you know, you mustn't expect me to tell you much about the pictures. Yes, I've been to see them. Went the other day directly after lunch, when I was feeling fairly strong. I resolved—in mad pride, due to the excellent champagne—that I'd stay in Burlington House for twenty minutes. But there are limits to human endurance—there are indeed. Seven-and-a-half minutes finished me off completely. I fled.

Shall I try to tell you what I saw? *Infandum renovare doloris*, as CICERO says. (A quotation or two helps you to understand that I am a Man of Culture.) Well, I will do my best. But all my feelings are crystallised in that one divine utterance of MOLIÈRE'S, *Quelle un outrage terrible!*

This, then, is what I saw. I saw pictures

in which grass was painted green, and the sky blue. Is it in vain, then, that for years our impressionists have urged—preached—exhorted—*proved*—that grass is sometimes crimson, sometimes a dear delicious ultramarine, but never, never green? I saw portraits—*mon foi!*—portraits in which the face was suffered to bear some resemblance to the actual countenance of the sitter. Why not become photographers at once? It would be but one more downward step, one more sign of the clammy vapour of degradation enshrouding the stifled genius of Art! Yes, there were portraits by Mr. CORPORAL, by Mr. DAVID, by President SETTER. . . . Excuse me a moment. The mention of that last name always makes me faint. Where the dickens is the brandy?

Shall I go on? Shall I tell you of Mr. SENEX's sheep, of Mr. MONASTERY's mummings, of—but no! *Jam satis*. "Hold, enough," as BYRON puts it. Enough of the Academy. Enough of the licensed charlatans who blatantly proclaim within its walls their foolishness! Enough of the deluded rabble which throngs the galleries, intent to admire and to purchase the most contemptible of daubs!

So I ran down the steps of Burlington House just as fast as ever I could. And then, shall I tell you what I did? I

hurried away to Hackney. There, in a back-street, is a frame-maker's shop. And in that shop hangs a delicious little painting—a study in sable and dark grey, entitled "*Oblivion*." For forty-five minutes I feasted my eyes upon that sublime work. And gradually the influence of that Masterpiece prevailed. The dreadful nightmare of the Academy passed away. I could even think of SETTER—of President SETTER—with no more than a slight feeling of nausea.

Dear reader, follow my example. Go to Hackney. Seek out that little triumph of Art, and let its message sink deep into your soul. I will not mention the painter's name—perchance it would have no significance for the brutal British public. But I happen to know that he will sell his Masterpiece at a price ridiculously low. I—he, I mean,—will be even glad to have an offer. And if you still doubt its superlative merit, this fact will convince you—it was rejected by the Academy!

A. C. D.

BRED IN THE BONE.

The Rev. Dionysius (after delivering a lecture on the Cathedral Cities of England). Now, children, for what is Canterbury most remarkable?

Master Brisket (promptly). Lamb, Sir.

THE GENERALS' POST-BAG.

[Mr. PUNCH is privileged to reproduce a few of the letters which have lately reached the British Generals in South Africa.]

DEAR LORD ROBERTS,—I should like to have called you BOBS, only Mamma says that you might be offended and would not answer my letter, and then I should not have a nice little letter from you to show to all my friends and send a copy of it to the newspaper; so it would have been no use writing to you with best spelling, and writing, too, which takes ever so long, would it? I ought to tell you we do love you so much, dear Lord ROBERTS, and TOMMY and JOHNNY and FRANK are all going to be soldiers when they grow up, and beat the Boers and everybody else like you do. As I am only a girl I suppose I shall not be able to fight, but I shall always be awfully patriotic and get up bazaars and concerts and things for the sick and wounded in every war, and have my name in all the papers and on posters in the streets, which will be lovely, and so no more from your loving little VERA VERE DE VERE.

P.S.—I must tell you our parrot says "Bravo BOBS" beautifully, and we are teaching Baby to say "OBERTS and EDVERS were two pretty men," only Baby does not learn so quickly as Polly.

DEAR GENERAL B.-P.—We are so glad that you have been made a General. When we heard of the relief of Mafeking we hung a large bathing-towel out of our nursery window in your honour. Everyone said it was so clever and original of us. Please send us some bits of shell, Mauser cartridges and potted horse when you have time. Written by Mamma for "LOTTIE," "JENNY," and "TODDLES."

DEAR KITCHENER,—I think I ought to write and tell you about ALICE. She's my sister, you know, and she's just dead nuts on you. She keeps your photograph in her room, and I caught her kissing it the other day. Of course I told her she ought to know better at her age, she's nearly twelve now, only a year younger than me, and she actually said that she wished it had been you instead of your photograph, which I thought indelicate. And said so. Whereupon she remarked that she gloated, the fact being that we have both read "Stalky and Co.," which is bad for us. Still I thought you ought to know about ALICE in case you should come home without getting engaged to a Boer lady. Kind regards to BOBS.

Yours ever, TOMMY DODD.

DEAR LORD BOBS,—I think I must write and tell you how I am getting on my first term at skool. We havnt enuff boys in this skool to play at cricket mutch, so we play Britons and Boars instead and as I'm the littiest of all the boys and have a sham white mustarch wich I got out of a cracker at Christmas I am always you.



MAFEKING NIGHT.

(Or rather 3 A.M. the following morning.)

Voice (from above). "GOOD GRACIOUS, WILLIAM! WHY DON'T YOU COME TO BED!"

William (huskily). "MY DEAR MARIA, YOU KNOW IT'S BEEN THE RULE OF MY LIFE TO GO TO BED SHOBER—AND I CAN'T POSH'BLY COME TO BED YET!"

There's a big boy named JONES, he's rather a lout and I don't think he makes a very good KICHNER, but as he's so big he has to be him and after all one's Starf doesnt matter much does it and I always do everything myself just like you do. I have the onner to report that we defeeted the Boars hevvely yesterday and I hope to enter Pretoria the same day as you do.

your devoted Leftenant,

CHARLIE THOMPSON, Field Martial.

P.S.—I hope you'll send me an answer soon as I want to have your ortergrarf.

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.—A telegram from "Our Special" at Newcastle, Natal, to the Times, on the 23rd instant, said that "the best celebration of the QUEEN'S Birthday will be a record day's work on the railway." And, later, when the news comes that the Royal Standard waves over Pretoria, then Newcastle can have another celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday, and the commencement of a new era in South African history, as the QUEEN'S Natal Day—with the accent on the first syllable.

OPERATIC NOTES.



It is a great mistake, Messieurs les Syndics of the Grand Opera, to give two operas so nearly akin as *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria* on the same night. Long as is the interval allowed between the two operas—and the “wait between the acts” is so protracted as to be absolutely wearisome, especially on such an “early closing night” as Saturday—yet the first strains of the prelude to *Cavalleria* seem like a continuation of a leading theme in *Pagliacci*. Place a light opera like *Philémon et Baucis* as a *lever du rideau*.

Mlle. SCHEFF, as the gay but unfortunate Nedda, achieved an undoubted success. Her voice is not powerful, but her singing is as artistic as her acting, which is saying a great deal, as, dramatically, Mlle. SCHEFF is quite the best Nedda that has yet been seen at Covent Garden. Signor SCOTTI'S

Tonio, both before and behind the curtain, was excellent. M. SALIGNAC did not succeed in giving due effect to the light and shade of the pathetic part of Camio. Signor DADDI, as the undersized *Harlequin*—not a “Daddi Longlegs,”—sang well, and by his artistic performance gave considerable importance to a very small part of “shreds and patches.” As *Silvio*, the fascinating farmer, M. DECLERY was about as satisfactory as any representative of this gay agriculturist ever can be. Signor MANCINELLI, displaying hearty Anglo-Italian sentiment, conducted “*God Save the Queen*” with energy, and was warmly welcomed by an enthusiastic audience, as crowded as distinguished. The Prince and Princess of WALES and the Duke and Duchess of YORK, were present on that memorable Mafeking Saturday, when everybody was out and about in London, when illuminations were as brilliant as at short notice could be expected, when troops of youths, boys, girls, all variously decorated with red, white and blue ribands and rosettes, waving peacocks' feathers, and embracing one another promiscuously as if they were engaged couples, as indeed they were for the moment, performing on trumpets, whistles, drums, cymbals, and other instruments of torture to the hearers, but of delight to the players thereof, were marching along the principal thoroughfares, where from every window, some bunting was displayed, or some national flags were flying. A noisy night for London, the proceedings smacking generally of *Kissengen*, and they didn't go home till morning, with Sunday's rest in prospect.

Monday, May 21.—Memorable for the *rentrée* of Madame MELBA, the most delicate Delegate sent us by Australia, and one who contributes so effectively to the harmony of the various component parts of our Empire. MELBA in excellent voice; but delightful as is PUCCINI'S *La Bohème*, surely the part of Mimi, the French seamstress, who sees so much of the seamy side of Parisian life, is scarcely worthy of our Melbourne soprano's vocal gifts. The singing of Madame ELDER, correctly attired in the not too becoming costume of the period, was equal to her acting, and both were excellent. The special success of a generally successful evening was achieved by Signor BONCI as *Rudolph*, the poet-lover of Mimi. His song “*Chi son?*” in the first act, was as vociferously as unanimously encored; and throughout he was admirable. One thing he lacks, and that is “inches;” but as GARRICK when in a passion, was six feet high, so Signor BONCI, when putting forth

his whole vocal strength, goes up to any height, and comes down again safely when he has finished. Pretty to see MELBA, as “the frail heroine,” taking him under her wing, reminding us of the nursery rhyme about the lady who “Had a little husband No bigger than her thumb, She put him in a pint pot, And there she let him drum,”—but in this instance for “drum” read “hum.” Messieurs GILLIBERT and JOURNET were quite the gay and soft-hearted Bohemians of the impecunious Quarter where “No Quarter” is given, and M. DUFRICHE artistically doubled the very distinct parts of the landlord, *Benoît*, and the elderly amorous councillor, *Alcindoro*. The singing and acting of M. BEUSAND, as *Marcel*, the lover of *Musetta*, contributed not a little to the genuine success of the *tout ensemble*. To the excellence of the stage management, as evidenced in the arrangement, the perpetual movement and verve of the crowded scene in the second act, more than a word of praise is due. The opera is several sizes too small for a Grand Opera House, but its stage-management was worthy of the best days of the Augustan era. Nowadays there is no mention of any Stage Manager in the programme. “On their own merits modest men are dumb,” and, therefore, it is to be supposed that the programme is drawn up by the stage-manager, who carefully sees that his own name is omitted.

Tuesday.—*Faust*, with CALVÉ as the dark-haired quite un-Marguerite-ish heroine, but giving us an exceptionally strong dramatic rendering of the part. Habitues, expectant, are satisfied; those seeing this *Marguerite* for the first time “in amazement lost.” Mlle. MAUBOURG repeated her success of the opening night as the gifted and unhappy *Siebel*.

Wednesday.—Notable performance of *Rigoletto*, with Madame MIRANDA, a very perfect *Gilda*, Signor BONCI as the fascinating Duke, with the song “*La Donna*” heartily encored, and Signor SCOTTI, vocally and dramatically excellent as the unlucky Jester to whom life was no joke. Great enthusiasm after first and second acts, and the Shakespearian motto for the night is in these lines from *The Tempest*: “Admired MIRANDA! Full many a lady I have eyed with best regard, and many a time The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage Brought my too diligent ear”—but rarely has applause been more heartily and worthily bestowed than on this *Miranda*, to whom we give, as she did to *Ferdinand*, “our hand with our heart in it.”

Thursday.—Fine performance of *Tannhäuser*. Fräulein TERRINA charming as *Elisabeth* (syndicate fortunate in getting this Bet on), and SUSAN going strong as *Venus*. Herr BERTRAM as *Wolfram* (what a combination of savage and pugnacious animals in one name!) very fine. Good house. Prince and Princess present.

AN OPERA STALWART.

DARBY JONES REFERS TO THE DERBY.

ONCE more, Honoured Sir, the Epsom Carnival is at hand, or, to be more correct, on Foot. Again will the Blue Ribbon of the Turf be sought for with all the Assiduity which Horseflesh can display, and again will your Devoted Henchman essay to give the Right Cue, with Exclusive Tip, to his Esteemed Patrons, many of whom, alas! are now donning the Imperial Khaki in lieu of the Racing Suit, as advertised by those Eminent Sartorial Purveyors, Messrs.—[No you don't, D. J.—Ed.]—whose Inventions are equally admired on the Hill, in the Paddock, and on the Stewards' Stand. To select the Winner of the Classic Contest is a Task worthy of the Research of Professor MOORE, of Almanack Fame, or Miss MARIE CORELLI, the Friend of the Fallen Angel. Nevertheless, I will tune up my Antique Lyre and warble:—



The *Fair Rose* I will not be anxious to pick,
 Nor the *Star* in my firmament place,
Jesse Premier I fear is a bit of a stick,
 But the *Dalesman* the *Gaul* may outpace.
Superlative may not be chosen by me,
Jack Tar with a wet sail may come,
 But *Concealment* a *Foxhall* the Second may be,
 And the *Northerner* harass near home.
 But I fully expect coming into the straight,
 The *Whiskeyman's* form will be strong;
 But the pair who at Newmarket ran *Tête-à-tête*
 Will be neck and neck going along;
 If the *light blue and violet* fail in his stride,
 Then the *purple and scarlet* will not be denied!

Such, Honoured Sir, is my Daydream.
 May you be on your Accustomed Well-
 appointed Equipage to lavish congratula-
 tions on Your triumphant Vates,

DARBY JONES.

TO THE CLERK OF THE WEATHER.

SIR, you have had a deal to bear,
 Contumely has been your portion.
 Of hatred you have had your fair
 proportion.

It has been yours remarks to hear
 In accents the reverse of pleasant
 From everyone at large, from peer
 to peasant.

The East wind blew from zone to zone,
 It gave us colds and pains rheumatic,
 We had some cause to take a tone
 emphatic.

But you have proved yourself to be
 Not quite so black as you were painted,
 Although as yet we shall not see
 you sainted.

The air is warm, the sun has shone,
 The former nuisance is abated,
 At last, my friend, you are exon-
 -erated.

A DERBY TRIPLET.

PAST. (Extract from a letter.) Had a most exciting day. Up at eight, and after breakfast took the coach. Such a crowd on the road down! Any number of vehicles. All sorts and conditions of men, women, children, carts, horses and dogs. Any amount of chaff. Then the race itself! Well, you will see a full account of it on Saturday in the sporting papers, so it will keep till then. I made a little money—which I subsequently lost in one of the gambling booths. We had lunch and etceteras. The result was that I came home at four in the morning with my hat decorated with Dutch dolls, and having a brass knocker in my overcoat breast-pocket. I have a very feeble recollection after 6 o'clock of anything, save we appeared to be driving on the pavement. Later on I remembered nothing, but if it comes to that, no more does anyone else!

PRESENT. (Telegram.) Train punctual. Luncheon satisfactory. Won the sweep. Home at seven sharp for dinner.



EPSOM UP TO DATE.

'Arry. "Ain't ye comin' to see the 'Orse run for yer money!"
 Cholley. "Not me! No bloomin' fear! I'm goin' to see this cove don't run
 with my money!"

FUTURE. (A Prophecy.) A man sat in an easy chair in front of a disc, and with the fork-shaped receiver of a telephone to his ear. His wife spoke to him, but he paid her no attention.

"You must give up that nonsense," she cried. "I want to ask you whether this letter will do to my mother."

As if in response to her appeal, the man put down the fork-shaped telephone-receiver, and turned away from the disc.

"I am at your service now, darling," he said tenderly.

"Why wouldn't you speak to me before? What were you doing?"

"What was I doing?" he repeated. Then he pointed at the disc and the telephonic receiver. "With their aid, my dear wife, I was assisting at the Derby!"

EVIDENT.—At the great gathering, to celebrate Her Majesty's Birthday, at Devonshire House, there was naturally enough the *Crème de la Crème*.



THE RULING PASSIONS.

Hair-dresser. "ANYTHING ON, SIR?"

Customer. "RATHER! A FIVER EACH WAY ON DIAMOND JUBILEE!"

PARIS BESIDE HERSELF.

(A purely imaginary description of an utterly impossible occasion.)

THE Rue Royale was thronged. From every house hung banners. The windows were open, and crowded with occupants who waved flags and cheered themselves hoarse. And yet it was nearly midnight.

On the omnibuses were crowds of people fluttering tri-colours and handkerchiefs. They sang songs and brandished their hats and umbrellas. All along the Boulevards the people yelled with joy. They formed themselves into processions and marched along with all sorts of trappings—some had fools-caps of parti-coloured designs, others false noses, all were delicious with joy. As the theatres emptied the audiences joined in the

cheering throng. Well dressed men and ladies were as demonstrative in their delight as those who had left the parterres and the upper galleries.

The Place de la Concorde was impassable. A compact crowd defied all attempts of the *gardiens de la paix* to make it possible for the carriages to pass. The traffic had to be diverted.

At the Hôtel de Ville the Mayor spent hours in haranguing the people. With wise forethought he had caused a transparency to be displayed giving the joyful news. The enormous crowd in front of the building danced with joy, and cheered and cheered and cheered again.

Then in the Rue de Rivoli perfect strangers stopped one another, shaking each other violently by the hand. Women kissed men they had never seen before

and would never see again. The songs, the shouts, the dances, the wild joy ran through the night into the early morning.

"How thoroughly French!" said an Englishman, adding in a lower tone, "and so entirely unlike our conduct in London when we heard of the relief of Mafeking."

A VERY FREE TRANSLATION.

[*"According to a New York paper, the 'good fellow' girl has arrived in America."*—*Daily Chronicle.*]

CHLOE, once you used to fly,

When returning home benighted,
Did a hare but hurry by,
Timid and affrighted;

When above you rustling trees
Happened with the breeze to flutter,
Faint of heart, with trembling knees,
Pretty little screams you'd utter.

Ah! but what a change we find
Now-a-days in maidens' fashion,
Now you move not in our mind
Pity and compassion;
Now at gentleness you scoff,
On our own ground half way meet us,
And at tennis, hockey, golf—
Play with us—and sometimes beat us.

Now your shoes are—number nine,
And their colour brown (or yellow).
Now you think it something fine
To be called "good fellow";
And your arm, once delicate,
Now is big and bare and brawny,
And your skin, once fair, of late
Almost verges on the tawny.

But (when all is said and done)
Since you still court approbation,
Take the wiser course, and shun
Each exaggeration;
We of Amazons are shy,
Over-coyness causes tedium,—
Ah! then, CHLOE, why not try
To preserve the happy medium?

NATIONAL ANTHEM.

I REGRET, Sir, that inspiration wouldn't come up to time or tune. In vain with wet towels constantly applied outwardly, and whiskey and water inwardly, I sat up the greater part of the night: in vain I cried "Come, Inspiration, lend thy furious aid!" I fancy the quotation is inexact: but no matter. I send you an instalment, and will continue it when the "fine frenzy" seizes me. Here it is,—to be sung by everyone, all together,

Honor et gloria!
Vivat Victoria!
On to Pretoria!

God save the Queen.

With that effort, Sir, I am exhausted. Ah, had I TUBAL's lyre! But no matter; allow me to sign with a bit of a motto, that in one sense might be applicable to our Laureate,
POETA NON FIT.



BEFORE THE FALL OF THE FLAG.

THE FORTUNE TELLER. "LET ME TELL YOUR FORTUNE, MY PRETTY GENTLEMAN. I SEE TROUBLE FOR YOU AT HOME. YOU'RE GOING TO TRAVEL."



MADE IN THE U.S.A.

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TONY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, May 21.—FINLAY making first appearance on important occasion in his new rôle of Attorney-General affected almost to tears. It fell to his lot to wind up on behalf of Ministers debate on second reading of Commonwealth Bill. Evidently with greatest difficulty prevented himself from stretching out hands and arms towards either side and crying aloud, "Bless you, my children!"

It was, indeed, a moment of rare serenity. DON JOSÉ, with consummate skill, piloted Commonwealth Bill past rocks that threatened to stave in the good ship's sides. ASQUITH, following on Colonial Secretary's explanation of settlement with Delegates, struck high clear note. Business, he said, reflected equal honour upon DON JOSÉ and the Delegates. No carping at political adversary, albeit it chanced to be the unoffending DON. No attempt to make Party capital out of Imperial affair. Said the right thing in the right way. Gave a tone to debate,



"If I had the honour of belonging to the other sex, and was sitting in the Ladies' Gallery listening to the debate, I should feel a little sore at the language used by the lords of creation."

(Dr. F-r-q-r-s-n.)

kept up till end. Pretty scene completed by faltering notes of the Attorney-General, the tear-dimmed eye, the arms spontaneously spreading out as aforesaid.

An hour of great triumph for DON JOSÉ,

modestly met. Lest it should prove overpowering TIM HEALY took the floor. Whilst earlier speeches going forward, TIM sat in corner seat with a volume spread out on its elbow. It was larger than *The Book of Hours*, and didn't look

indignation because of alleged slight to the interests of his brethren and sisters in the slums. In one form or other "the vision of the housemaid" is ever crossing his mind. She is to him, though of course in quite another way, what



WHAT THE WORKING CLASSES EAT;
OR, THE MARKISS'S IDEA OF A PLEBEIAN TEA-TABLE.

like a m'issal. Debate died down. Speaker rose to put question that Commonwealth Bill be read a second time. TIM rose fondling the massive volume. It turned out to be collection of amendments moved on the GLADSTONE Home Rule Bill. "It's one of eight," said TIM, fondly regarding it, as if the rest were favourite nephews and nieces.

What he wanted to know was how DON JOSÉ, bringing in for Australia a Home Rule scheme, broader in its reach, more momentous in its possibilities, than that submitted for Ireland, had not adapted some of the amendments under which GLADSTONE'S Bill was smothered? A great deal was said then about maintaining the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Not a word on that topic passed DON JOSÉ'S lips in connection with the Bill designed to crown the edifice of Home Rule in Australia. The colony was populated largely by Irishmen. Why might TIM'S kin at the Antipodes enjoy perfect freedom whilst TIM himself and all his suffering tribe were bound hand and foot—not to speak of being gagged—by a tyrannous Government?

"It just comes to this," said TIM, in mood of bitter reflection, "an Irishman must be transported before he can be trusted."

A hit, a palpable hit, enjoyed by none more keenly than DON JOSÉ.

Business done.—Commonwealth Bill read a second time amid loud cheers.

House of Lords, Tuesday.—There is a strange stratum of the Democrat in the MARKISS. When he isn't freezing an audience with the manner of a blue-blood aristocrat whose house was founded in the spacious times of Queen ELIZABETH, he is scalding it with the overflow of

BEATRICE was to DANTE. The daughter of the Florentine citizen inspired the *Divine Comedy*. The vision of the housemaid, whom the Shop Girls Seats Bill utterly ignored, brought up the Prime Minister in fine frenzy to denounce a measure fathered by a faithful supporter in the other House.

In Protean form the Housemaid, representative of the working classes, is always crossing the MARKISS'S mind. To-night Lord AVEBURY, our dear JOHN LUBBOCK of yesteryear, introduced a Bill propounding a scheme of early closing shops. Instantly there crossed the mind of the Premier the vision of "a poor woman going home from work, who had to provide her husband and children with bread, fish, oil, coal, candles, and—and many other things," the MARKISS hurriedly added, having got to the end of his imagination as to what a poor woman usually took home for tea. Contemplation of man's inhumanity to women made the MARKISS mourn.

"I observe," he caustically remarked, fixing his eye sternly on the Bishop of WINCHESTER, "that the restaurant, the cigarshop, the newsvendors, dealers in hot meats and spirituous liquors—shops, in short, which noble lords might desire to patronise after seven in the evening, are carefully excluded from the Bill."

The BISHOP visibly blushed. Spirituous liquors are of course out of his range. Evidently there crossed the mind of the MARKISS the vision of a familiar figure, with gaiters ineffectively hidden, dropping in at a pie shop after an unusually late sitting of the House, peradventure completing unwonted orgie by furtive purchase of a twopenny cigar.

The MARKISS's noble rage prevailed. AVEBURY, wishing he was safe back in the Commons, timidly took a division. Only sixteen peers and prelates ventured to follow him into the division lobby, seventy-seven trooping round the



An Authority on "Wire" Entanglements.
(Sir Edw-rd S-as-n.)

MARKISS as he went forth to assert the freedom of the citizen to shop after seven o'clock.

Business done.—In Commons SASSOON

made interesting speech in support of motion for inquiry into defects of Cable Communication. Prince ARTHUR, in most winning manner, coaxed him not to go to a division.

Thursday.—If there is one quality more than another that shines in the radiance of the Irish character it is absolute impartiality. Striking instance leapt to light this evening. It appears that on Mafeking Day, Belfast, like rest of Empire, gave wings to joy. In course of mutual congratulation on deliverance of B. P. and his gallant men, theological difficulties naturally developed. Belfast can never forget the Boyne, nor keep the head of WILLIAM OF ORANGE out of its Memorials. Presently, forgetful of Mafeking, the boys were at each other's throats, one section howling remarks personal to the POPE, the other retorting with aspirations derogatory to the eternal welfare of King WILLIAM. Some heads were broken: many buildings damaged.

MACALEESE brought matter under notice of Chief Secretary, with inquiry as to amount of damage done to Roman Catholic buildings, and as to prospects of compensation. GERALD BALFOUR admitted the facts. The total amount of wreckage resulting from exuberant satisfaction at the relief of Mafeking was £42 9s. Here the Irish Members groaned, rent each other's clothes, and looked askance at JOHNSTON of Ballykilbeg.

"Of that sum," continued Chief Secretary, "damage amounting to £21 7s. was done to the property of Roman Catholics, and £21 2s. to the property of Protestants."

House roared with laughter: but there was uneasy feeling in British breast that in no community on this side of Irish Channel would transitory discord on doctrinal points have been so nicely adjusted. A paltry balance of five shillings to the credit of the Protestants is not worth mentioning.

Business done.—Irish Members delivered long series of speeches denunciatory of

Local Government Board. Unspeakably dreary performance.

Friday.—Met King of SWEDEN AND NORWAY at Lady WIMBORNE's to-night. Most affable gentleman; only, in conversing with him, one hankers after a step-ladder.

"How is it, *cher TOBY*," he said, "that you never put me in *Punch*?"

"Well, Sir," I replied, "you see our



East Finsbury.

(Mr. H. C. R-ch-ris, Q.C.)

pages are limited in size, and there's such a lot of your Majesty. The only way we could do it would be to put you in one week, say down to your royal watch-chain, with announcement that picture would be continued in our next. Process unusual, but so are your Majesty's inches."

"Ah," said the King of NORWAY AND SWEDEN, "I never thought of that."

Business done.—More Irish speeches and an occasional vote.

IN-DELEGATE.

Enter WOLMARANS, FISCHER, and WESSELS.

Trio. We are the Boer delegates, and we appeal to Europe to interfere on behalf of the Republics, and prevent England from sweeping away the charming system of government formerly obtaining at Pretoria, and annexing us.

Europa. Ah, yes, precisely so. How are you? Quite well? That's right. Enjoy your voyage? So glad. Nice trip, isn't it? Well now, I'm afraid I must leave you, as I've some rather important business on hand—going out to luncheon, in fact, so I must say good day.

France. Ah, *ce perfide Albion!* Mille tonnerres! *Revañche, Fashoda!* You come to us for sympathy against *les brigands Anglais!* *Mais certainement!* We you

embrace and kiss on both the cheeks—you come to our Paris, you see our so grand Exposition, you stay at our best hotel (paying your own bill there, well understood), you—eh, but what? If we interfere with England? But no. Although the Englishes are well beast, *vous savez*, they have the Fleet, they have the Army—*Enfin*, we do not interfere. *Au revoir, ta-ta!*

Germany. Interfere with England? *Donnerwetter!* *Sauerkrautundlagerbier!* Also *Blitzen!* We will see you Father-landed first!

Italy. Non ð interfere. Walkero.

Holland. Takeje our blessingje. Der Hollander willje attacken der Englanders (in der newspapers). *Loveje Oom and Tanta PAUL, but interfereje—?* Nein, emphaticallyje, nein!

Spain. Interfero? Why? Also whato! *Corpo di Pyjama!* Every grandee in Spain would swear a grand D at the bare idea. No betto!

America. Wal no, I reckon not. The subject's all very well to "monkey" with, at election times, but I guess VICTORIA's more our fancy than Pretoria jest now, and blood is thicker than even a Boer's head. No deal.

PUZZLED.

ARE steamboats all a-going now
From London Bridge to Kew,
In spite of L. C. C.? But how
We wish the boats were new!
And what about the other boat
From Paul's to Battersea?
If once more all the lot's afloat,
Then where's the L. C. C.?



(Continued from page 378.)

PART III.—The Workshop of the Fates.

CHAPTER I.

THE summer and the autumn had passed away, De-

cember was well into its second week, and BRAITH-

WAITE, true to his resolve, was still living at Burnstone in Mr. HADDEN'S Vicarage. BAX, as NUTTY had sagely remarked, was precious little of a fool. His Eton training had given him a solid foundation in classical scholarship, and the loving care of the VICAR, who was a ripe and exact scholar, deeply versed in the ancient literatures, had during the past five months of serious work so shaped and widened his learning as to make him look forward with considerably less anxiety to his trips.

It must be acknowledged that BAX had done his share by working hard. Burnstone is a pleasant little village lying some two miles inland from the banks of the Thames, but it provides no swift and whirling round of amusements and excitements, calculated to distract an earnest student. BAX, though he kept a sculling boat on the river, never allowed his exercise to interfere with his reading, and thus earned the VICAR'S commendation and the gentle reproaches of Mrs. HADDEN, who opined that it was not good for young men to be for ever poring over books, and that she for her part thought Mr. BRAITHWAITE ought to be more in the open air. BAX, however, persevered, and MILLIE backed him up in his devotion to duty.

Between this young lady and BAX highly confidential and pleasant relations had been established. In fact I may as well state at once, and without any disguise, that they were heartily in love with one another. No word had yet been spoken, but both, as the day for BAX'S departure came nearer, had begun to realize the crowded, half-acknowledged joys, no less than the sharp, inevitable pains of the situation. But they were both young, and both were secretly convinced that destiny, having brought them together, could never be so churlish as to separate them for long.

I have said that MILLIE was a very pretty girl. A local poet, whom rumour identified with the curate, had addressed some stanzas to her in "The Burnstone Weekly Advertiser and

Agricultural Standard," and it had been generally conceded in select circles that the appropriateness and excellence of his sentiments had more than atoned for his occasional deviations from the strict rules of rhyme. The lines had been entitled "To M-LL-C-NT," with the added information that they had been "Written in Dejection," and the first verse, which I here quote, may serve as a sample of the rest:—

The pet of her parents, the pride of the Parish,
All sorrows and griefs and solitudes vanish,
And joy from her eyes doth her beakers replenish,

When M-LL-C-NT H-DD-N appears.

Her foot is the foot of a nymph, not a Satyr;
Her smile is a triumph of mind over matter;
And the Zephyrs come down from the sky to look at her;
Her teeth are like diamonds—(De Beers).

Readers of this were informed in a footnote that the De Beers diamonds were "the best and whitest in the world."

There was, however, an *amari aliquid* in BAX'S *sons leporum* in the shape of the three Fates who had taken so strange a fancy for him. Not a week had passed since Henley Regatta unmarked by a visit from the three weird and embarrassing sisters. BAX never could tell when they would come; they gave him no premonitions, but suddenly, while he was reading, or sculling, or taking his meals, he became aware that they were present, smiling and nodding to him, and, if others were in the room, putting up gnarled fore-fingers to their shrivelled lips to give him to understand that he was not expected to converse with them. When they found him alone, they were garrulous enough, and always showed a deep interest in his classical studies, having made up their minds, as they assured him, that he was to distinguish himself. On the whole, however, though they were always perfectly invisible, and well-behaved, and benevolent, BAX felt that he had seen too much of them. He was unable to speak about them to any one else. Who would have believed him if he had said that he was in the habit of receiving CLOTHO, LACHESIS and ATROPUS? Besides, his delicate feeling as a gentleman instinctively revolted from the idea of mentioning to anybody these private visits of three single, if supernatural, ladies who talked so constantly and so freely of his good looks. Obviously he could not speak

without appearing to boast, and that would, of course, be shocking bad form. So he bore his troubles in silence and longed for release.

For this second week of December BAX had accepted an invitation to shoot with NUTTY, whose father had a large estate with well-stocked coverts some twenty miles from Burnstone. "Come on the Wensday," NUTTY had written, "we're going to shoot the three last days of the weak and we ought to have good sport." BAX was conscious of having done good work at his books, the Vicar raised no objection, and on the appointed day BAX had arrived and had found to his joy that DICK CARTER was another of the guests. They had a cheerful evening, and on the following morning the shoot began.

Seven guns made up the party—our three friends, with NUTTY's father and three others, all good shots. The morning was crisp and clear, the trees were almost bare of foliage, the keeper was in high spirits—everything seemed to promise a great day. BAX, though a youngster, was an undeniably good shot, ready, quick and clean in his execution. It was well that he was so, for the coverts of Wilmington Court stand on a slope for the most part, and the birds that come out over the guns take no mean, inglorious flight, but soar high and bold—a despair to the fumbler and the dull of eye.

It was the last beat, the sun was just sinking, and the beaters, a well-drilled, silent line, were coming through Bushman's Wood, which Mr. WILSON always liked to keep as a *bonne bouche* for the end of the day. BAX was forward with four other guns, and streams of pheasants had been coming over him. He had acquitted himself well, but the best was yet to come, for it was at the end of this beat and in his direction that the birds always flew thickest. He had just polished off a satisfactory right and left and was taking his second gun from his loader, when, lo, from the edge of the covert three female figures came slowly towards him. "Who on earth," he thought to himself, "are those three old scarecrows, and what in the name of all that's deadly do they mean by coming out at the guns?" He was about to shout to warn them of their danger when, in a lurid flash, he recognised his tormentors, the Fates! He gasped. A big bunch of rocketers flew over him. "Birds over, Sir!" whispered his well-trained loader. "Shoot, BAX," shouted DICK on his right. He raised his gun automatically and fired, but not even a tail-feather rewarded his effort. The next moment the three stood beside their favourite, and ATROPOS addressed him:—

"WILFRID, WILFRID," she said—they had become familiar with repeated interviews—"we have taken much pleasure in your skill, and trust we do not disturb you overmuch."

"Not in the least, not in the least; only too glad, you know," he muttered politely, but without conviction; "but if you would kindly stand behind me instead of directly in front I fancy I could shoot better."

The loader stared: he thought his master had gone mad to be talking to himself.

"There is to be no more shooting," retorted ATROPOS firmly, "KESSY and CLOTTY and I have determined that this day has been sufficient for you. To-morrow you are to return to your studies."

"But, my dear Miss ATROPOS, it's out of the question. I've promised to stay two more days, and you wouldn't have me break up a shooting party. I assure you," he pleaded, "it can't be done. I don't know how it was in your time, but nowadays we don't do such things."

"Shoot, BAX; shoot, man!" from NUTTY. "What the dickens are you doing?"

"No matter," said ATROPOS, "we have seen to that. To-morrow you must depart."

"To-morrow you must depart," echoed her sisters; "but in the meantime shoot once more."

He did, and brought down the noblest rocketeer of the day.

"What were you up to, BAX?" said NUTTY, when the beat was over. "Why, you might have got a dozen, and you never let your piece off. However, that last one was a ripper, and no mistake. I'm glad you got it, old man, for I'm awfully sorry to tell you the party's got to break up. The Governor's just had a telegram brought out to him to say his uncle's dead—rich old party in the North, head of the family and all that—and he's got to go off to-morrow. He thinks we oughtn't to shoot to-morrow and Saturday, but he hopes you'll turn up again this day week to finish the shoot. Great nuisance, but it can't be helped."

So these unconscionable old ladies, as BAX miserably reflected, did not even stop at murder, for he couldn't doubt that NUTTY's great uncle had been sacrificed by them to serve what they imagined to be his interests. He was bound to admit, however, that they had shown great tact and consideration for his feelings in not forcing him to leave Wilmington Court without the shadow of a reasonable excuse.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN BAX arrived at Burnstone Station on the following morning he was delighted to find MILLIE waiting for him on the platform, with the old brown spaniel, Plato, in attendance. "Papa got your telegram all right, Mr. BRAITHWAITE," she explained, "and as I had to drive the pony-cart in this direction anyhow, I thought I might as well fetch you."

"By Jove, it's awfully good of you, Miss HADDEN. I'm afraid all these gun-cases and cartridge-magazines will be very much in your way. Morning, Plato, there's no room for you, old man; you'll have to run." Plato barked defiantly, and immediately installed himself firmly in the pony-cart, from which he was extracted only after a severe tussle and with some ignominy. He had no very high opinion of the station; no amount of diligent search had ever revealed the presence of rabbits in the waiting-room or amongst the stunted shrubs that bordered the platform. Yet he never omitted to draw the whole place in a thoroughly business-like way whenever he visited it. Like certain men who see *f*es everywhere, Plato cherished an eternal delusion with regard to the ubiquitous prevalence of rabbits and his own ability to secure them wherever found.

This drive was for BAX a memorable one. Never, he thought, had MILLIE looked so fresh and sweet, never had there been a kinder, a more irresistible light in her sparkling eyes. He began with the usual commonplaces, the number of pheasants killed, the reason for the break-up of the party, NUTTY's latest Nuttysm, and then suddenly, before he could realise what was happening, his heart seemed to swell and swell until it burst, and a torrent of broken, burning sentences poured out of his mouth. She must have seen how much he cared for her—he couldn't live without her—did she care for him at all?—he knew he was young, but his mind was made up—he could never change—would she marry him?—he would speak to her father at once—do let her give him a word of hope—only one word. MILLIE was driving; the pony feeling the reins slack went slower and slower and at last stopped altogether. Plato scrambled into the cart and wasn't even noticed. Then MILLIE raised her glowing face, looked straight and deep into BAX's eyes and nodded gravely. It wasn't much, but it was enough for BAX, who broke the peace of the country lane with a shrill shout of triumph. The startled pony resumed his plodding, Plato, sure that rabbits were about in millions, dashed out yelping into the hedge, and MILLIE drove on, remarking, with a happy laugh, that at present she wanted her left hand for the reins. When they arrived at the Vicarage she sprang out, rushed upstairs and flung herself into her mother's arms.

When his luggage had been taken out and the pony bestowed in the stable, BAX began to cool down and to realize things. He was the happiest man in the world—that he knew well enough; MILLIE was a darling—what had he done to deserve that she should care for him? But she did—that was the great

point. DICK CARTER must be his best man, of course, and NUTTY must be at the wedding and all the rest of them. The Vicar would marry them—no, of course he would have to give MILLIE away—but, by Jove, he hadn't asked the Vicar yet; and then he would have to see his grandfather and get his consent. What a nuisance all that was; why couldn't two people who wanted to get married just get married without all this bother and have done with it? Well—no time like the present. He would interview the dear old Vicar at once. Filled with this noble resolution he knocked at the study-door and went in.

The Vicar was sitting at his desk, with heavy learned volumes spread round about him. He looked very placid, very kindly, but also very large and strong. Somehow BAX felt that if only Mr. HADDEN had been a smaller, feebler man, the process of tackling him would have been easier. He hesitated with unusual nervousness near the door and tried to speak, but the words refused to come.

"Come in, BRAITHWAITE, come in and sit down," said the Vicar benevolently. "I was very sorry in a way to get your telegram, for I had hoped you would enjoy three good days of sport. But I'm glad to get you back; the house is quite dull without you. What, however, brought you away?"

BAX explained volubly.

"Ah, indeed; very sad, very sad. A great blow, no doubt. Did MILLIE meet you at the station?"

"Yes, Sir, she did. It was very kind of her to fetch me—and, by the way, I wanted to ask you—"

"Yes, BRAITHWAITE; I've looked up that point in the *Philebus* for you. It's really quite plain. If you assume that—"

"Oh, no, Sir, it wasn't anything about the *Philebus*—it was about MIL—Miss HADDEN, I mean."

There was a dead pause; the clock ticked soberly and slowly on the mantel-piece; Plato, always on the wrong side of any door, was scratching to come in. The Vicar settled his spectacles on his nose and looked blandly at BAX. "Yes?" he said interrogatively.

"Well, the fact is, Sir, that I've just asked her to be my—that is to marry me, and I thought you ought to know about it—and, well, that's why I've come to you. I want to ask your consent."

There was another pause, and Plato was still scratching.

"You may as well let him in, BRAITHWAITE," said the Vicar; "he'll give us no peace till you do. Besides, he's one of the family, and has every right to know what's going on." Plato was admitted, and curled himself contentedly at BAX's feet.

"My dear BRAITHWAITE," said the Vicar at last, "I admit I am surprised at this declaration. Nothing I have seen has led me to expect it. What does MILLIE say?" BAX said lamely but truthfully that MILLIE hadn't seemed to mind. "You are both very young," continued the Vicar, "yes, very, very young. I know what you are going to say, and I admit that you are old beyond your years. I think you know your own mind. I will tell you plainly that I am very fond of you, and I own that the prospect of binding you still more closely to me and mine is a pleasing one to me. MILLIE, God bless her, is my pride and joy"—BAX assented heartily—"and I would do much to make her happy. But—oh yes, BRAITHWAITE, there is a but—consider for a moment. You have been a pupil in this house, a very dear friend to me, I know, but still a pupil. Will it not be said that we were schemers who took—please let me continue, BRAITHWAITE—who took advantage of your youth to entrap you? And if that were said or thought, do you think MILLIE could be happy—do you think we, her parents, could be happy? I may be too sensitive on the point, but I feel it deeply. You are destined in the course of Nature to be the Earl of STILLINGFORD, MILLIE is the daughter of a poor country Vicar. If," he continued, with a humorous twinkle, "I were a Bishop, for instance, I could treat with you on equal terms, but Bishops do not come my way. I do not give you a final refusal, that

would be absurd; but I say take time. Consider the matter more carefully, and in the meantime let there be no hampering engagement. I ask this for MILLIE's sake as well as for yours."

BAX argued and vowed and protested in vain. The Vicar was adamant, and the young lover had to draw such comfort as he could from the fact that the Vicar had not definitely said No.

When BAX a little later told his story to MILLIE he found her very determined.

"BAX," she said "you mustn't mind. I'll wait a thousand years if necessary. Besides, Mamma is on our side, and Papa is sure to come round. But, dear BAX, couldn't they un-earl you, or, better still, couldn't Papa be made a Bishop? The Bishop of Broadwell died the other day. Why shouldn't Papa be Bishop of Broadwell? I'm sure he's good enough and learned enough."

"By Jove," said BAX, "why not, indeed? I'll dash up to London to-night and see my grandfather about it. He's Prime Minister, and has the making of Bishops. Besides, I've never asked him for anything of that kind yet, and I don't see why I shouldn't begin."

So BAX, who was nothing if not quick and impulsive, packed his bag, and, without going through the formality of sending a telegram, left by the 5.30 for London.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN BAX arrived at Paddington about an hour later and stepped out on the platform, he was astonished to find himself received by one of his grandfather's footmen, who took his bag and conducted him to a comfortable brougham emblazoned with the Stillingford arms. There could be no mistake about it; he had often driven in the carriage and knew it well.

"Why, MEADE," he said to the coachman, "what on earth brought you here? How did his Lordship know I was coming?"

"I dunno, Mr. WILFRID," said the stolid MEADE. "Is Lordship's orders were we was to meet you by this train."

"I suppose the Vicar must have wired," thought BAX, as he got in. "Still it's a funny thing for him to have done. Can't make it out."

The carriage drove off, and BAX abandoned himself to pleasant memories of MILLIE, interspersed with nervous forecasts of his approaching interview with his grandfather. Suddenly he became aware that they had passed through a large gateway, and in another moment the carriage stopped. BAX looked out. The huge pile of gloomy building, with a sweep of steps leading up to the front-door, was certainly not Stillingford House.

"What's this, MEADE?" he asked; "where the deuce have we got to?"

"Beg pardon, Mr. WILFRID, 'is Lordship said I was to drive you to this address. 'E was very paticler about it."

There was something strange about MEADE's voice, and BAX looked at him. No; it was certainly MEADE. There could be no mistake about that port-wine-tinted face and that stout figure. At this moment the front-door was flung open and an impressive butler came down the steps.

"You are expected, Mr. BRAITHWAITE," he remarked. "Will you please to follow me?"

More and more mystified, BAX did as he was requested. He went after his guide into a vast hall, up a broad staircase thickly carpeted. The butler paused before a door on the first landing, looked round to assure himself that BAX was following, and then, opening the door, announced in a stentorian voice, "Mr. BRAITHWAITE!"

The sight that met BAX's eyes as he walked in was certainly not calculated to remove his surprise. He found himself in a large room brilliantly lighted. A table, spread for dinner, stood at the further end. On it were huge, gleaming dishes of silver heaped with all kinds of hot-house fruit. Beautifully wrought decanters of cut-glass caught the light on their facets and reflected it in prismatic rays. The centre of the table was banked up with pink and white and yellow

roses of great size and extraordinary loveliness. The walls of the room were studded with little golden knobs and hung with curious fustoons of fine wires. All these details he took in with a quick glance. Then a door in the wall opposite him opened, and three beautiful girls, draped in flowing silky garments, came slowly towards him.

It was a situation full of embarrassments, and so greatly did it affect BAX that with an unreasoning impulse he turned to fly.

"Stay, WILFRID," said the leader of the girls in a soft and musical voice, "you cannot depart as yet."

It was true. The door was closed behind him and, do what he would, he could not open it.

"But there must be some mistake," he stammered. "I haven't the pleasure—I mean, I don't know quite how I got here—I'm sure it's all a mistake, and you're expecting somebody quite different."

"Not in the least," said the girl, "we know you well, Mr. WILFRID ERSKINE BAXENDALE ST. JOHN BRAITHWAITE, and we expected you here. In fact," she continued laughing, "we planned the harmless little trick that brought you to this house. We have power over coachmen and footmen as over all other men, for know that we are indeed the immortal Fates!"

"Good Heavens!" said BAX.

"Not always are we ancient and worn and haggard," she went on. "When one of our favourites has breathed tender vows into a maiden's ears and she returns his love, then it is permitted to us to see him once and once only in this guise. To-night we meet you again, but henceforward never again."

BAX's courage began to return. The girls were certainly very pretty, and as they seemed to be quite well disposed towards him, he thought he might as well make the best of the situation. So he advanced and shook them warmly by the hand.

"My dear Miss ATROPOS," he said, "you really must forgive me, you and Miss LACHESIS and Miss CLOTHO, but of course I didn't recognise you for a moment. How could I? I shall be only too glad if I can be of the least service to you."

"It is from us," said the girl, "that service shall come. For we can bend the inexorable minds of fathers, aye, and of grandfathers to our purpose. This room is the centre of our work. Press but one of these golden knobs and our commands flash out to the ends of this island. Over all the fields of life and activity we hold sway."

"By Jove," said BAX, "a sort of telephone exchange and kodak all in one. You press the button and somebody else does the rest."

An idea struck him:—"By the way," he remarked, casually, "do you ever do anything in Bishoprics?"

"How so?" asked one of the girls.

"Oh, you know what a Bishop is, don't you? An old chap who wears a low broad hat and gaiters. They put 'em in pictures with mitres and crooks, but I've never seen them like that. Now I particularly want to get some one made a Bishop."

BAX didn't really believe the thing could be done in this way. Still there was just a chance, and it wouldn't do for him not to try it.

"We think we understand," said LACHESIS, smiling slyly. "Come hither and your desire shall be granted." She took him into a corner of the room where there was a stand on which reposed a huge directory. She turned over the pages swiftly: "Here is the name," she said, "HADDEN, Revd. HUBERT EUSEBIUS, No. 246,709. CLOTHY," she continued, "find wire, No. 246,709, and give it to WILFRID."

CLOTHO found the wire in a moment.

"Take the wire in your right hand, WILFRID, and press this knob—it is the knob for bishoprics—with your left. So."

Half incredulous, BAX followed her instructions. As he pressed the knob there was a pealing crash of church music, an invisible choir sang a few rolling bars of an anthem, and

on the wall above BAX's head appeared a transparency picture of Mr. HADDEN in a broad hat and episcopal gaiters.

"It is done," said the Fates portentously. "And now, WILFRID, let us to the feast. To-night we part for ever, but first, since you are weary, we shall offer you meat and drink."

Over the details of the banquet that followed BAX, the soul of candour, has always been curiously reticent. But we may be sure, I think, that even when pledging the health of his hostesses gallantly in their best extra sec Nectar, *cuvée réservée*, he did not forget MILLIE HADDEN.

How he spent the intervening time BAX has never been able to remember accurately. He believes he slumbered peacefully in a room hung with heavy curtains, and he has a fleeting recollection of soft footsteps about his bed on the following morning, and of whispers that seemed to soothe him to sleep again. At any rate, on the evening of that day he found himself in a Great Western train as it stopped at Burnstone Station.

When he arrived at the Vicarage MILLIE met him at the door.

"Oh, BAX, you darling, how quickly you managed it!" she exclaimed in excitement, "Papa had a letter from Lord STILLINGFORD by the second post to-day offering him the Bishopric of Broadwell! Now we can get engaged at once. Oh, BAX, you are a dear! But, of course, I shall never tell Papa how it was done."

"By Jove, nor shall I," said BAX—and he never did.

The *Times*, on the following morning, remarked in a leader that in recommending Mr. HADDEN for the vacant Bishopric of Broadwell, the Prime Minister had shown his usual independence of mere party considerations, and his sense of the merits of a very learned and distinguished man whose presence on the bench of Bishops would add strength to that body at a time when it was much needed.

But for BAX and MILLIE a paragraph that appeared a little later on was of greater importance. This announced that "a marriage has been arranged and will shortly take place between Mr. W. E. B. ST. JOHN BRAITHWAITE, grandson and heir of the Earl of STILLINGFORD, and MILLICENT, only daughter of the Revd. H. E. HADDEN, Bishop designate of Broadwell."

As a matter of fact, a month after the Classical Tripos list came out with BAX's name actually in the first class, the marriage was solemnised with great splendour in Broadwell Cathedral.

On the morning of this great day Plato was summoned to the room of his young mistress, who in the midst of her preparations could still spare a moment or two for her faithful dog.

"Plato," she said impressively, "I'm to be married to-day, and then I'm going away for a fortnight, so you must promise to be a very good dog while I'm gone, and be particularly kind to Papa and Mamma. Do you understand, Plato?"

Plato wagged his stumpy tail pathetically: he knew that agitations and departures were in the air, and hoped against hope that, if his loved ones went away, he might be taken with them. "And Plato," she continued, "I've got a lovely bit of light blue ribbon for you."

Plato advanced, delighted, for he loved to have his neck bound round with ribbons. Thus decorated he was the first to welcome the newly-married pair as they came out from the Cathedral. If barks mean anything, Plato's barks meant that he approved of the wedding and considered the ceremony a success. Indeed, as NUTTY wrote to a friend, "it was an A1 show, the best marriage I've ever seen."

R. C. Lehmann